



**Stony Brook
University**
Psychology MA Students
2021 - 2022

Welcome!

Meet Our New Psychology MA Students!



Delanie Fico

("Duh-lay-nee"; she/her)
Boston University, 2021
Philosophy & Psychology

Research interests: Social identity, Prejudice, Cognitive dissonance

Previous experience: Currently, I am researching the evolution of mating patterns across social class and gender through a curated interactive survey under the advisement of a BU professor. For the past year, my research partner and I have analyzed studies, ran test surveys, and gathered new data with the goal of publication this summer. Last spring, as an intern for an immigration law firm, I researched the psychological effects that assimilation may have on immigrants in the United Kingdom for one of the firm's cases.

Research interests and career goals: Ultimately, my career goal is to advocate for mental health reform in the American education system, as I believe adolescents face psychological strain navigating their identity in different social settings. I would like to research how minority identities impact a student's ability to learn in a classroom setting and what improvements can be made to promote social well-being. I want to further the understanding of microaggressions, attachment styles, personality development, and how the three intersect.



Wenting (or Kingsley) He

("Went-ting"; she/her)
Queens College, 2021
Psychology

Research interests: Drug addiction, Depression, Antisocial disorder, Neurochemical changing

Previous experience: I have been volunteering as an undergraduate research assistant in the Drug Addiction and Learning Motivation lab in my junior year. The projects I have participated in were aimed to test how heroin addiction affects rats' behavior and learning ability for both alcohol rats and water rats. My main duty was to inject heroin to the rats and collect heroin sensitization data based on their motivation behavior after injection. Also, I presented the result of our study on Neuroscience Day by introducing the goal, procedure, result, and conclusion.

Research interests and career goals: My goal is to pursue a Ph.D. in neuropsychology and cognitive learning and work as a University Professor one day to help students understand psychology and its importance in everyday life. For my research interests, I would like to focus on exploring how different kinds of drugs can affect individuals' cognitive function and lead to their behavior change. Also, understanding the neurochemical changes in people who suffer depression and antisocial disorders is one of my interests as well.



Steven Honovic

("STEE-vin"; he/him)
Stony Brook University, 2021
Psychology & Sociology

Research interests: Autism interventions, ODD, Developmental psychopathology

Previous experience: I have been volunteering as an undergraduate research assistant in two different labs for the past three years. One lab was social/health psychology based that was essentially looking at decision-making and patterns in health behaviors. The other lab was psychiatry based and was studying the relationship between personality traits and psychopathology in 9/11 first responders. I currently work in a special education preschool as a Teacher's Aide which has been greatly rewarding and has taught me so much about working with children and supporting them through their learning and development.

Research interests and career goals: My ultimate goal is to pursue a Ph.D. in clinical psychology and one day work as a clinical child psychologist. I believe researching and then implementing the proper interventions from a young age is incredibly important so that we can set children up for success later on in life. I find developmental psychopathology very interesting and would love to work with children with autism or children with ODD/various other behavioral diagnoses. It would be great to research risk factors and effective interventions/behavior plans so that we can continue to best support these populations of children.



Shana Mathew

("SHAN-uh"; she/her)
CUNY Brooklyn College, 2021
Psychology

Research interests: Clinical/ Neuropsychology, Behavioral, Psychopharmacology

Previous experience: I was a research assistant in a biochemistry lab with a focus on epigenetics and histone modification. My research experience continued in an educational psychology lab where I completed an honors thesis evaluating statistics course grades as predictors of statistical literacy. Additionally, I was a volunteer for the Bridge NYC by co-leading a weekly arts and crafts group with individuals recovering from mental illness and substance abuse. I am currently serving as a volunteer for seniors at Sunrise Assisted Living by conducting weekly phone-calls to check-in with my assigned individuals.

Research interests and career goals: I am hoping this program will help refine my specific interests, but I currently am interested in pursuing a career as a clinical psychologist and specializing in neuropsychology. Because I have never experienced it before, I am very interested in clinical psychology research. I am also interested in both the pathophysiology and psychopharmacology associated with mental illness. In the future, aside from clinical work, I hope to be involved with making psychological treatment and resources accessible to all communities and removing the stigma around receiving such treatment.



Laura Jans

(she/her)

Stony Brook University, 2021
Psychology

Research interests: Child & adolescent mental health, Parenting, Risk and protective factors

Previous experience: Since my junior year, I have been volunteering in a lab which focuses on the development and dissemination of interventions for youth mental health problems. Specifically, I have worked on projects testing brief and accessible single session interventions (SSIs) targeting depressive symptoms in adolescents. I also spent the past two semesters working with another student on a joint senior honors project: developing a desktop application for students studying introductory statistics. Aside from working on these projects, some of my most meaningful experiences in college have been volunteering with children facing medical challenges and their families.

Research interests and career goals: Broadly, I am interested in the causes of and effective treatments for youth mental health problems. Some additional interests of mine are accessibility of mental health resources, risk factors for youth mental health problems, and the roles of family and parenting in a child's well-being. In the future, I would like to pursue a Ph.D. in clinical psychology and I hope to work with children and adolescents.



Sakura Ito

("sah-koo-rah"; she/her)

Purdue University, 2020
Psychological Science

Research interests: Risk factors and interventions, Developmental psychopathology, Youth mental health

Previous experience: I began as a research assistant in a clinical psychology/neuroscience lab to assess neural sensitivity to social and monetary rewards in depression among college students. I then served as project/EEG coordinator to aid in the conduct of a study examining social contexts and neural markers of individuals in relationships for depression vulnerability. Afterward, I conducted my honor's thesis to evaluate psychopathology outcome differences between in-person and digital social support interventions. Additionally, as part of the College of Health and Sciences Success Mentors Program, I formally mentored undergraduate freshmen in their college transition while providing academic, emotional, and career support.

Research interests and career goals: My research interests encompass studying the diverse factors that put individuals at risk for onset, development, and maintenance of depressive and anxious symptomatology in youth. Mainly, I wish to examine how these factors influence an individual's childhood to adulthood transition and shape their developmental psychopathology trajectory. In the future, I hope to attend a clinical psychology Ph.D. program and ultimately conduct translational research that investigates the role of individual traits in predicting risks for youth depression and anxiety and improving intervention outcomes.



Charlie Leighton

(he/him)

Bard College, 2017

Psychology

Research interests:

Depression, mindfulness, neuroscience

Previous experience: As an undergraduate, I worked as research assistant in my advisor's laboratory studying eating disorders in a college population. I also developed and presented my senior thesis, which studied the hypothesis that impairments in facial emotion recognition could be used to help predict MDD before the onset of debilitating symptoms. After graduation, I spent a year working as a research assistant on two longitudinal studies examining the effects of sleep quality and stress levels on life outcome. In the summers following my junior and senior years, I also worked with and cared for adults and children with mental & physical disabilities.

Research interests and career goals: My research interests and career goals are to one day conduct research on the connection between the psychological and neurobiological mechanisms underlying mental illness as well as have a clinical practice working with adolescents struggling with MDD & anxiety. Ideally, I hope to integrate clinical experience with an understanding of neuroscience to help develop targeted and non-chemical treatments for mental illness that harness the body's own capacity for growth and healing. I imagine that such treatments will combine activities that promote a strong mind-body connection - such as meditation, yoga, weightlifting, and running - with existing psychotherapeutic approaches.



Linda Nisanova

("Lin-duh"; she/her)

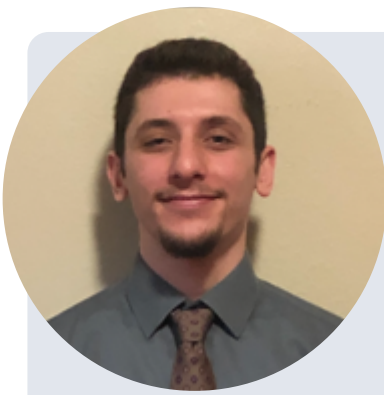
Brooklyn College, 2020

Psychology

Research interests: Clinical, Children; Anxiety

Previous experience: I was part of the NSF funded REU program as an RA for a lab revolving around the socialization of children in different ethnic groups. We focused primarily on younger children at the age of 2. In the same lab we also conducted a study examining the treatment of adjuncts during the pandemic. Additionally, I am currently an RA at PSY-FI, a psychology fitness based startup company. The data team and I create lecture packages and research different statistics focusing on the effect of fitness on psychological well-being. I am currently a pharmacy technician helping with the vaccine effort.

Research interests and career goals: My research interests revolve around clinical psychology, particularly that of adolescents and children. I plan on focusing more with anxiety/depressive disorders and eating/feeding disorders. I hope that this experience will help me in applying for doctoral programs in clinical psychology. From there, I would like to be a clinical psychologist.



Christopher Khudari

(he/him)

University at Buffalo, 2021
Psychology

Research interests: PTSD,
Collective trauma, Cross-
cultural psychology

Previous experience: I was an undergraduate RA for a social psychology lab, as well as a research coordinator/RA for a clinical psychology lab studying depression. I wrote and defended an honors thesis before I graduated. My thesis was a qualitative study on how COVID-19 has influenced the ethnic identity and acculturation process of international students from the Middle East and North African region studying in the U.S. The study involved constructionism, narrative inquiry, and semi-structured interviews which I conducted, transcribed, coded, and thematically analyzed.

Research interests and career goals: My main research interests involve trauma, PTSD, cross-cultural psychology, and how different cultures/values are related to suffering. My long-term goal is to be a clinical psychologist that focuses mostly on the clinical practice aspect of psychology and who is interested in working with children and adults.



Grace Shariat Panahi

(she/her)

Indiana University
Bloomington, 2017
Neuroscience, Biology

Research interests: Clinical
affective neuroscience,
Clinical developmental
psychology, Intervention
efficacy

Previous experience: In my past four years working as a research assistant, I investigated neurobiological mechanisms of intracellular signaling events implicated in susceptibility to psychotic disorders. Specifically, I examined the effects of a signaling pathway on the expression of genes that direct neurodevelopment through extracellular-matrix mediated neuronal plasticity, in addition to other investigations. As a post-baccalaureate teaching assistant, I taught empirical techniques within molecular neuroscience while remediating issues with laboratory-based data collection and analyses. I also assessed behavioral, affective, and cognitive variations in those with neural and psychological disorders through several years of volunteer work. Additionally, I identified modifications to caregiving methods through interview assessments, which were implemented to support psychological and social wellness.

Research interests and career goals: I am interested in studying how personal characteristics and life experiences, such as adversity and mental-training practices, direct the trajectory of one's neurodevelopment and psychological well-being through interdisciplinary techniques. Specifically, I aim to investigate the neural and psychological plasticity of emotional, perceptual, and cognitive control processes as they relate to the course of healthy psychological development as well as psychopathology and its remediation. I intend to pursue a career in clinical psychology to study how these processes vary with individual differences and to identify active components within interventions to improve personalized treatments, assessments, and prevention efforts for children and others affected by mood and psychotic disorders.



Di Wang

("D"; he/him)

Stony Brook University, 2021
Psychology & Sociology

Research interests: Sleep;
Risk factors; Personalizing
treatment

Previous experience: I worked as a research assistant in two labs during my undergraduate years, and my main work was literature research and running research trials. Based on my research interest, I started a literature review regarding Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Insomnia. I became an intern in Putnam Hall in my junior year, and currently, I am helping develop an ongoing assessments build-out in REDCap. In my last year of college, I became a mentor in the psych peer mentor program (PMP) at Stony Brook and was selected to become the PMP coordinator in the incoming year.

Research interests and career goals: My research interests are mainly in sleep disorders and treatment. More specifically, I wish to find sleep disorders and earlier risk factors in studies and help me with further goals like personalizing treatments for sleep disorders based on individuals' early psychological backgrounds. I believe psychological diagnosis and treatment should vary from person to person, and personalizing treatment can provide the most effective plan for each client. I hope to become a psychologist and continue to study sleep disorders. Ultimately, I want to develop guidelines for personalizing combined therapies for sleep disorders based on individuals' risk factors and backgrounds.



Lauren White

(she/her)

University of Northern
Colorado, 2020
Psychology

Research interests: Clinical,
Cognitive neuroscience,
Behavioral neuroscience

Previous experience: During my undergraduate years I had the opportunity to work within two amazing labs. The first allowed me the opportunity to research the relationship between aggression and childhood maltreatment, as well as the relationship between academic performance in college and childhood maltreatment. The second lab I worked in focused on the relationship between abuse in relationships and physical health in college students.

Research interests and career goals: My research interests primarily surround fields of neuroscience and work being done involving antisocial personality disorder. My goal is to eventually obtain my PhD and work on furthering research on how ASPD interacts with neurological functions.